

COMMUNITY CALLED TOGETHER

Stewardship 2022
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Amenia Union, NY

All things come from you, Lord, and of your own have we given you.
[1 Chronicles 29:14]

*Make us, we pray, faithful stewards of your great bounty, for the
provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need.*
[BCP, 246]

There is a popular adage that states, “Show me your checkbook and I will tell you your values.” Nowhere does that ring truer than in the budget of a church. What is often dismissed as a necessary and boring formality—making sure that a parish complies with the requirements of the diocese or the IRS—actually tells the story of how the gospel is being lived out, boots on the ground. Where our money goes tells us what we value and what our mission in our community is or might become. It focuses our attention on *ministry* rather than on the bottom line. It breathes life into our call to spread the Good News!

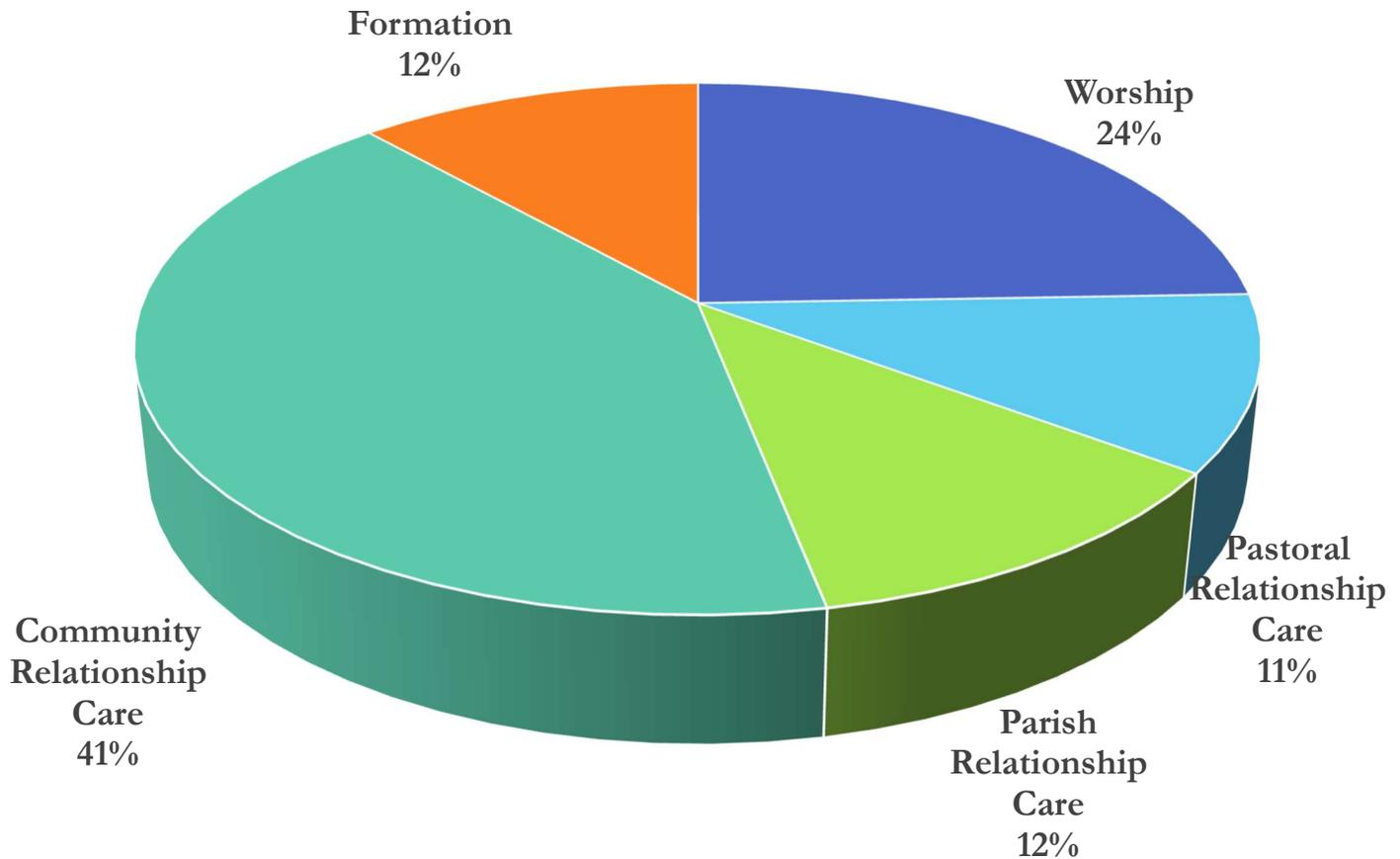
The church that understands that difference between maintenance and ministry can more easily adapt to changing situations, innovate new ways of showing the gospel’s relevance to an ever-evolving world, and respond effectively to the needs of its neighbors.

In this booklet, we tell the story of St. Thomas’s budget. As you read, we invite you to ponder these three questions: Where do I see God at work in my own life? What parts of St. Thomas’s mission compel me to join in? Where might the Spirit be leading our church next?

WHERE DOES OUR OFFERING GO?

Below you will see a pie chart that represents five areas of ministry focus for St. Thomas. Each slice of the pie represents not just the use of facilities or resources for that area, but time spent by paid staff. Read on to hear about the ministry focus areas in detail!

St. Thomas 2022 Projected Budget



Formation	\$ 24,319.71
Relationship Care	
Community	\$ 86,585.46
Parish	\$ 24,663.71
Pastoral	\$ 22,279.71
Worship	\$ 51,059.17
TOTAL	\$ 208,907.76

WORSHIP

*Come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
Come, let us bow down and bend the knee;
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.*
[Psalm 95:1, 6]

Though 2021 has seen a return of a bit more normalcy, our worship life still looks very different than it did prior to the pandemic. We invested in a robust internet connection and A/V equipment to simulcast our in-person worship services, which means that we can participate in worship no matter where we are. Sacred space is anywhere and everywhere, and we are fully embracing that reality. In 2022, 24% of our budget will go to support the worship life of the congregation. This includes a large portion of the utilities and insurance to cover the worship space, even though it is only used once each week. In what ways might our beautiful building be used by the wider community during the week, maximizing the space for the good of our neighborhood?

ESTIMATED EXPENSES FOR THE MINISTRY OF WORSHIP: \$51,059.17

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP CARE

*I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me
something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was
naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of
me, I was in prison and you visited me.*
[Matthew 25:35-36]

Community relationship care is all the ways we minister with the wider community and world, more traditionally called “mission and outreach.” Caring for our neighbors—heart, mind, and body—is a hallmark of a healthy church. There’s an adage, “A church is its members, not a building.” A newer version

of that is, “A church is its *mission*, not its survival.” St. Thomas is thriving because we are focused on our mission.

The care we have been blessed to offer our community burgeoned during the pandemic and continues to grow:

- The number of our neighbors we see on Fridays continues to grow:
 - Average in 2019: 185 people/week
 - Average in 2020: 325 people/week
 - Average in 2021: 382 people/week
- We have partnered with health clinics, Medicaid providers, addiction and mental health counseling services, and veteran support organizations to offer resources and referrals to anyone who might benefit.
- We continue to deliver meals to our neighbors who have transportation or health barriers.
- The number of asylum-seeking families we serve in Dover Plains has grown to approximately 60 families, up from 15 in 2019 and 50 in 2020.

St. Thomas was able to build the Harvest House/Casa de la Cosecha last year without loans or property encumbrance—truly a miracle! Food of Life/Comida de Vida has lived in this new location for nearly a year now and the space is perfect.

Andrew and James Tart spearheaded a GoFundMe campaign to move and refurbish the Ark playground, which inspired another idea. The space around the Harvest House/Casa de la Cosecha will be turned into a “teaching garden,” where members of our community can come to learn about horticulture and environmental stewardship, spend time relaxing in a peaceful space, or browse the “pick your own” section of vegetables and flowers. Plans are still being formed, but if you’re interested in this amazing next step, please let someone on the Vestry know ASAP!

ESTIMATED EXPENSES FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP CARE: \$86,585.46

PARISH RELATIONSHIP CARE

*Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.*

[1 John 4:7]

*How good and how pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!
It is like the dew of Hermon flowing down upon the hills of Zion.
For there the Lord has commanded the blessing: Life forevermore.*

[Psalm 133:1, 3 (ELW)]

Another defining characteristic of a healthy Christian community is a sense of togetherness and love. Parishioners build bonds of mutual affection, turning to each other in times of pain and joy, to celebrate and support, to challenge and be challenged to grow deeper in love and grace.

Many of us hoped that 2021 would bring an end to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the virus's persistence, though, we have persevered and even thrived as a community. The strength of the relationships within our parish family has been a stabilizing, grounding, and supportive influence throughout the last two years. This truly is a place of welcome and belonging.

ESTIMATED EXPENSES FOR PARISH RELATIONSHIP CARE: \$20,450

PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP CARE

Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

[Galatians 6:2]

A letter from AJ:

Beloved,

Our life together is not just about corporate worship, friendships, and mission. When we make the decision to follow Jesus, it is a commitment that encompasses our whole life. That walk with Jesus and each other includes our own personal struggles and searching

for God in the private parts of our lives—especially in tragedy, pain, fear, loss, and transition.

A part of parish life that is sometimes less visible is the availability of pastoral care—that is, clergy or trained lay leaders who walk with you through difficulty. We are not meant to struggle alone, and the church, of all places, is where we can feel safe in being honest about our pain or fear; where we can show our true selves, broken and sometimes at the end of our ropes; where we can be supported.

Over the last 20 months, I have been privileged to accompany folks at St. Thomas as they walked very difficult paths. In addition, our growing and deepening relationships in the wider community have resulted in St. Thomas being recognized as a place where *anyone* can turn for pastoral support. Our neighbors who visit the pantry regularly ask for prayers and seek time alone with me or others to unburden their hearts and share their struggles with kind and supportive friends. A beautiful example of this: Jolly Stewart spends nearly every Friday at the pantry building relationships with our neighbors and volunteers, listening, and loving them through the struggles we all face.

Please never hesitate to reach out to me, no matter the circumstances.

In peace,
AJ+

ESTIMATED EXPENSES FOR PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP CARE: \$22,279.71

FORMATION

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly;
teach and admonish one another in all wisdom.*

[Colossians 3:16a]

Formation is any activity that we undertake to consciously grow in our life with Christ, whether that be through prayer, study, or experience. Many of us remember—fondly or otherwise—our time in “Sunday School” as youths: singing songs that teach Bible stories, verse memorization charts, getting a certificate of perfect attendance. We know, however, that our spiritual growth does not stop when we stop growing physically! Our journey toward God continues for our whole lives.

St. Thomas fosters formation through our weekly hybrid (online and in person) book/Bible study (Tuesdays at 5:15 PM). We have spent a majority of 2021 doing a deep dive into the Gospel of Mark. Our formation time is a lab

for practicing genuine Christian community—we risk exposing our true selves, we practice loving and living in our own skin, we share how our own lives are changed by our deepening relationship to God and each other, and we support each other as we dive ever deeper into God’s love for us all.

A new formation opportunity began in October. A confirmation class meets every other Tuesday at 4 PM. This diverse group of community members are seeking to better understand their relationship to God, the Church, and the world around them and are excited to learn more about God’s love for all of creation! You can look forward to these confirmands being involved in worship and service and will be paired with parishioner mentors in the coming months.

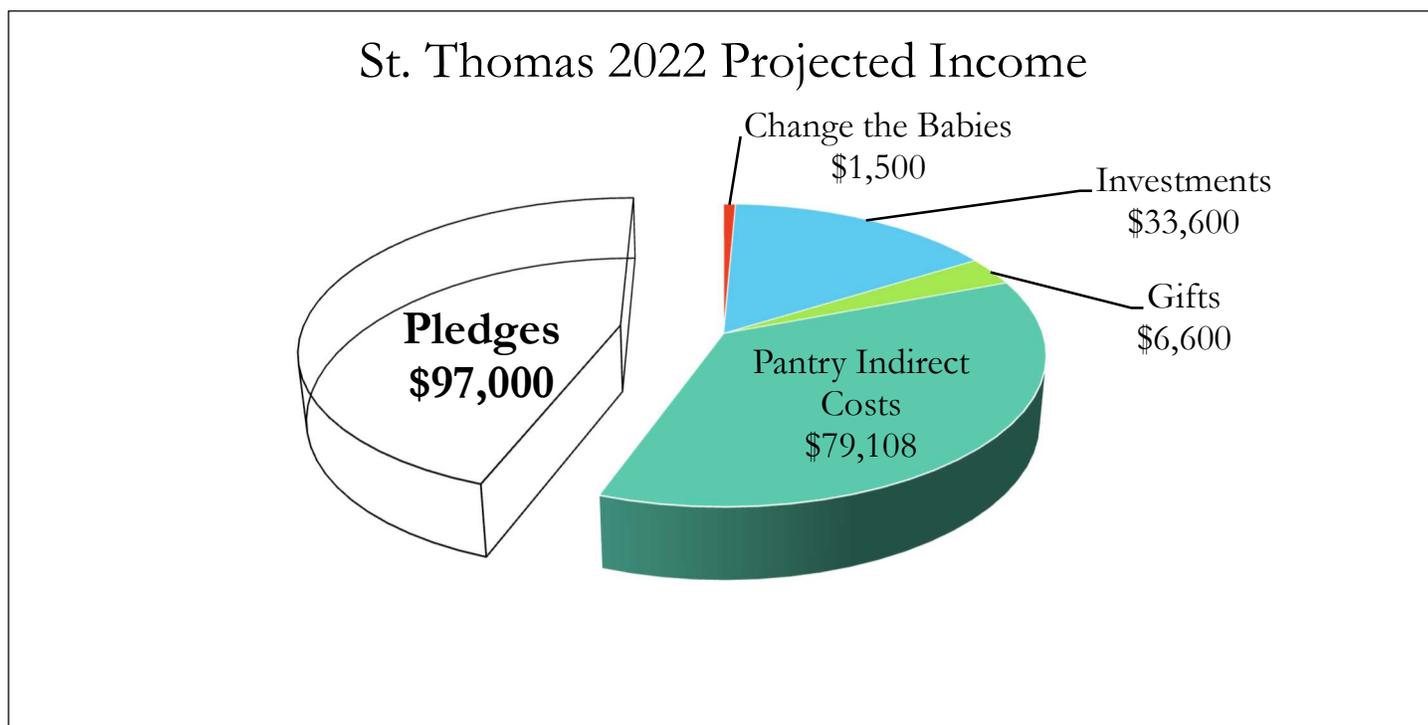
ESTIMATED EXPENSES FOR FORMATION:

\$24,319.71

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

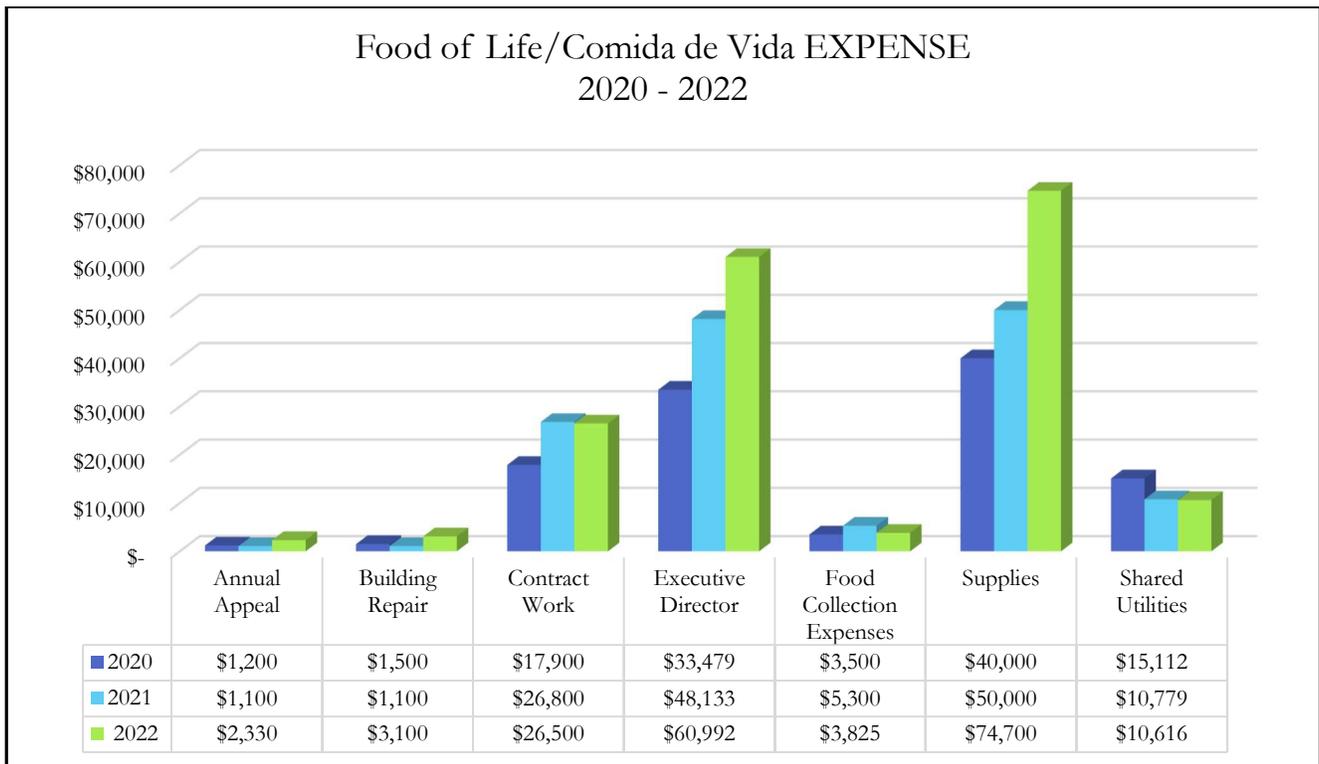
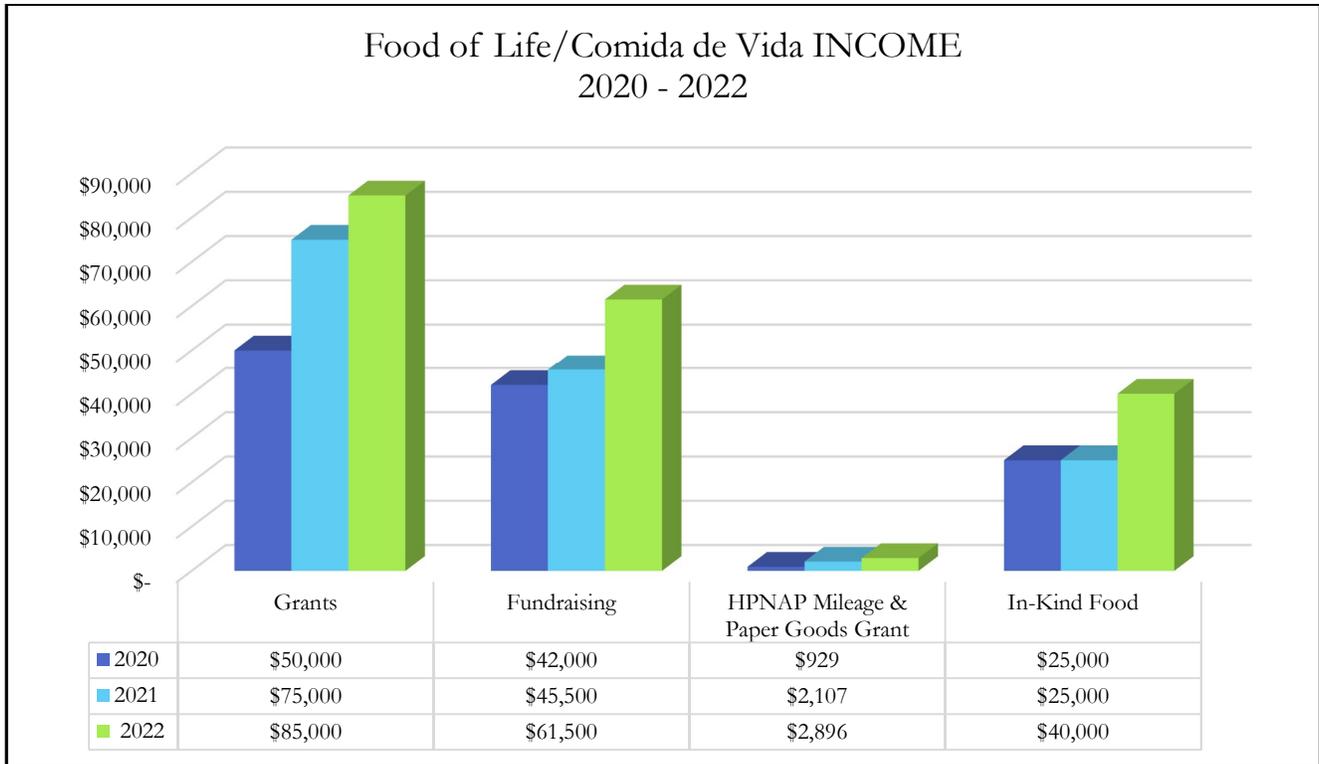
The income that enables all of St. Thomas' ministries to happen comes from just a few sources:

- **44.53% from pledged giving by our members**
- 36.32% from Food of Life/Comida de Vida Pantry for indirect costs
This includes a share of the priest's salary, percentages of utilities, & insurance costs
- 15.43% from investments and endowments
This includes investments with Bank of New York Mellon; Diocesan Board of Managers; and Diocesan Investment Trust
- 3.03% from gifts (non-pledged)
- <1% as a pass-through donation to our Change the Babies ministry



***Without the continued and dedicated support of our parishioners,
St. Thomas' ministries would not have the same impact.
YOU ARE ST. THOMAS!***

OUR MISSION BUDGET IN BRIEF



TOTALS	2020	2021	2022
Income	\$117,929	\$147,607	\$189,396
Expense	\$112,691	\$143,232	\$183,463
	\$ 5,238	\$ 4,375	\$5,933